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## NOTES.

Mr. Walter Malone, of Memphis, whose volume of verse *Narcissus and other Poems*," we noticed favorably several years ago has been steadily devoting himself to his high vocation with a faith that deserves commendation in these prosaic days. His volume "*Songs of Dew and Dawn*," (Buffalo, C W. Moulton) contains the best of his poems up to 1895, and that entitled "*Songs of December and June*," (Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott Company), holds the sheaf gathered the following year. Mr. Malone has remarkable lyric fluency and a wide range of themes—and here we find the secret of his merits and defects and the remedy for the latter. Mr. Malone is still young and we are permitted to hope not only that he will live to write more poetry, but that he will also have time and patience to prune his tendency to luxuriance of utterances and of theme. Our poet has good critical ability as is evidenced by the poems on Shelley and Byron in the first of the volumes named above; what he needs is to criticise himself as well as he can others. He ought to check a certain out-gushing of personal communicativeness too apparent in his love-lyrics and in those referring to his own ambitions. He ought to check also a tendency toward a lavish use of tropes such as mars a poem like "*The Poppy*" in the second volume. He ought, furthermore, to be on his guard against allowing his fluency of utterance to let him lapse into the commonplace as in these lines from "*The Penitentiary*."

" The penitentiary opens iron jaws  
To swallow up the mass of shame and sin."

That he can avoid all these faults is clear enough from one stanza in the poem entitled "*Katharine*" where a

familiar idea is so well rendered that one does not think for a moment that the theme is threadbare. It runs :

A poem thou wouldst have me write to thee,  
But words are all too weak and rhymes to dull  
To bear the message from the heart of me,  
O maiden, *blithest* and most beautiful.

In short, we feel confident that Mr. Malone has an opportunity before him to do something for his native section in the fair and high domain of poetry. We trust that he will be true to himself and to his early love and not be tempted off into the easier and more lucrative paths of prose—for truth to say, we much prefer his verses to his volume of stories entitled “The Coming of the King,” (Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott Company, 1897).

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We have on our table a volume of “Village Sermons,” by the late distinguished scholar and theologian Dr. Hort, (The Macmillan Company). The editor tells us in a prefatory note that it is not without misgivings that he adds this volume of sermons to the one already in existence. His excuse is the “rich and deep theology” which underlies these discourses. A rich and deep theology is certainly a safe foundation on which to rest a man’s preaching, but when sermons are almost totally devoid of literary grace and charm even a rich and deep theology will not insure for them a reading public. The publication of this volume will add nothing to the already assured reputation of Dr. Hort. But it would be well if the indiscriminating admirers of good men would recognize the fact that every man has his limitations and that because one is an accurate scholar and a profound theologian it does not necessarily follow that he is also an effective preacher. But while this is true it is only just to say that there are one or two sermons in the volume before us which are suggestive and helpful. Dr. Hort’s treatment of Christ’s sufferings and death in the sermon entitled, “God’s love shown in Christ’s death” is especially strong and free from a mawkish sentimentality that has

often characterized the utterances of the clergy on the Passion of Our Lord. The three sermons on the Temptations of Christ and the concluding series of twelve sermons on the Old and New Testament are among the best in the books.

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A very interesting volume is Mr. Theodore W. Koch's "Dante in America—a Historical and Biographical Study," which has been reprinted from the Fifteenth Annual Report of the Dante Society. Mr. Koch gives a full account of all the work—and it amounts to a good deal—that has been done on Dante in this country, and Southern readers will be particularly gratified by the account he gives of the labors of Richard Henry Wilde. We may mention by the way that the Dante Society is anxious to increase its membership and consequent usefulness and that we know of no worthier organization for the purposes of culture in our midst. We trust that such of our readers as are interested in Dante or Italian literature in general will join the Society, whose headquarters are at Cambridge, Mass.

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"*In Plain Air*," by Elizabeth Lyman Cabot, published by Holt & Co., of New York is a bright, clean story of life in a gossipy New England town. The heroine has ideals and proceeds to cherish them in spite of the hereditary views of the place. She interests herself in a young man of artistic tastes and allows him to fall in love with her. She champions the cause of another callow youth whose engagement with a young lady of Brookfield upper-tendom has been broken off because of supposed intemperance, and finally falls in love with the gallant and handsome roué of the town, and—shocking to relate—marries him! He was one of those men who needed a larger environment and a more wisely discriminating love than Brookfield afforded and he found both in Marion Clayton.

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In sharp contrast with the above, both in depth of plot

and vigor of style, is the "*Gadfly*," by E. L. Voyrich. It is a gruesome tale of the Italian struggles for liberty. The hero is the illegitimate son of the wife of an English gentleman. His father is a Roman Priest. The lad plunges into the seditious movement of the time and "confesses" his complicity. The secrecy of the confessional is violated. He is thrown into prison and subjected to great cruelties. On his release his foster-brother's wife presents him with the evidence of his illegitimate birth. He immediately smashes the crucifix before which he had been accustomed to kneel in his dead mother's room, rushes into atheism, feigns suicide, and disappears. Years afterwards he reappears as a leader in one of the secret societies of the day, is arrested and condemned to death. In the prison, his father now a Roman Cardinal, comes to see him. They recognize one another. The *Gadfly* is shot by a firing-party, the ecclesiastic executes a *coup de théâtre* in church and commits suicide. The *motif* of the story lies in the striking contrast between the intrepid bravery of the Atheist in the face of danger and death and the hypocritical casuistry of the Roman ecclesiastic. In a word the book is a bold plea for infidelity and a rude slap at the church of Rome in particular, and Christianity in general.

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"*The White Hecatomb*" is a collection of short stories of life among the natives and Boers of South Africa. The author, Mr. W. C. Lently, wields a vigorous pen, and his delineations of South African life will help to while away many a half hour of the "heated term."